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SNIE 14.3-64 ADVCON

4 March 1964

*SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE*

THE OUTLOOK FOR NORTH VIETNAM

- Internal Politics and Political Problems
- Economic Problems and Prospects
- Military Problems and Prospects
- The Support of Insurgency
- The Outlook for North Vietnamese Policies

NOTE: This is an advance copy of the conclusions of this estimate as approved by the United States Intelligence Board. The complete text will be circulated within five days of this issuance.

Central Intelligence Agency

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*Submitted by the*  
**DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and NSA.*

*Concurred in by the*  
**UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD**

*on 4 March 1964. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.*

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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

4 March 1964

SUBJECT: SNIE 14.3-64: THE OUTLOOK FOR NORTH VIETNAM

THE PROBLEM

To assess the strengths and weaknesses of North Vietnam (DRV), and to estimate its probable courses of action over the next several months.

NOTE

Firm information about North Vietnam is extremely sparse. Accordingly, analysis of the economic and political situation and especially of the size, structure, and capabilities of the armed forces, is extremely difficult, and the judgments below must be considered tentative.

CONCLUSIONS

A. We believe that the North Vietnamese leaders look at Communist prospects with considerable confidence. In South Vietnam, they probably feel that GVN will to resist is waning, and may feel that the same is true

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of the US. They may seek to speed the process by a step-up in current Viet Cong tactics of pressure and terror. We think Hanoi will stop short of introducing sizable DRV military units into South Vietnam, lest this bring about a major US military retaliation. In Laos, they will protect the positions they have already achieved and support Pathet Lao efforts to erode the non-Communist position, but will seek to avoid initiatives that would provoke US military intervention. (Paras. 32-39)

B. North Vietnam's external successes have been achieved despite important internal problems and vulnerabilities. The DRV faces severe and chronic food shortages and widespread apathy among the populace and even the lower ranks of the Party. The economy is overcommitted to developing heavy industry at the expense of agriculture and heavily dependent on Bloc aid. The personal dominance of Ho Chi Minh masks differences within the leadership which will be sharpened after his death. (Paras. 2-15)

C. These problems and vulnerabilities do not threaten the regime's control at home or materially hamper its present level of effort against South Vietnam and Laos, nor do they preclude a somewhat higher level of such effort. However, the DRV probably could not sustain large-scale military involvement, such as open invasion, without a considerable increase in Chinese Communist or Soviet aid. (Paras. 16-24)

D. The Sino-Soviet split poses a painful dilemma to North Vietnam. Powerful motives impel it to avoid taking sides definitively, but events have moved the DRV progressively closer to the Chinese position. We believe that Hanoi will nevertheless try to maintain as cordial relations with Moscow as circumstances permit. (Paras. 29-31)